autumnal colouring. The Lanarkshire record is the only one in the West of Scotland where a colony is known to have over- wintered.

Water fern is sold as an ornamental plant in garden centres, but as we have not seen it in any of those in the Clyde Valley, it probably arrived as a migrant on the foot or feather of a bird. We have been asked if the Water Fern is eaten by wildfowl. Certainly not by the geese which frequented the pond throughout the summer of 2003! – nor in the Forth and Clyde Canal as far as we know. Although each plant is so tiny, the growth of the main colony was so compact that it completely damped down the little ripples generated when wading in to obtain a close–up photograph.

With the view of addressing the threats posed by invasive alien plants, a document has recently been circulated to interested parties by the Scottish Executive, inviting comments as to whether or not a number of extra species should be added to Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The list includes Water Fern. In the event of a decision to have it included, Water Fern- each plant of which is minute- would be in the same category as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)!

Fig. 1. Individual plants of Water Fern in 2002.

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GREY SQUIRRELS AND PINE MARTENS AT EAST LOCH LOMONDSIDE

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Loch Lomondside would appear to be one of the first parts of Scotland where Pine Martens *Martes martes* spreading from the north-west highlands have come into direct contact with a well entrenched population of the introduced North American Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*. This has raised the possibility that the presence of this agile, tree-climbing carnivore might prove an effective check on Grey Squirrel numbers.

The writer's observations on Grey Squirrels made during the 1990s in the woodlands bordering the east side of Loch Lomond would seem to suggest that their numbers were indeed falling following the establishment of Pine Martens in the district (Mitchell, 2001, p. 173). Since then, confirmation of such a decline has been forthcoming from up to a dozen other observers who live and/or work in the area. Without exception all had the same story to tell, that in their own particular patch the once familiar Grey Squirrel had either disappeared or become extremely scarce. Conversely, on the off-shore islands – where as yet no sightings of martens have been reported – the squirrel population has shown little change (M.A. Bates *pers comm.*).

Positive evidence that Pine Martens were preying on Grey Squirrels was finally obtained in early April 2004, when the gamekeeper to Buchanan Castle Estate near Drymen witnessed a marten closely pursing a squirrel through the tree tops before catching it and making a kill. The marten then descended with its quarry before dragging it down a hole amongst the roots of a tree (A. Cowan, *pers comm.*).

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SUCCESSFUL TRANSLOCATION OF GRASS VETCHLING *LATHYRUS NISSOLIA* IN DUMBARTON FROM A SITE OF DEVELOPMENT TO AN AREA OF SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

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In July 1990 the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) Dumbarton habitat survey team located a previously undocumented colony of grass vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia* growing at the site of a former quarry at Dalmonach, Vale of Leven (NS397805) near Jamestown, West Dunbartonshire (Futter, 1990). The colony was flourishing in an area of wet grassland and was a locally abundant plant in the field where it was growing. Further detailed surveys carried out by the SWT team did not locate the species at any other site within the Leven Valley or Dunbartonshire (SWT 1992).